

# THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO



**TONI ATKINS**  
COUNCILMEMBER  
THIRD DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 18, 2002

### CONTACT: George Biagi

(619)236-6633 Fax:(619)595-1481

[gbiagi@sandiego.gov](mailto:gbiagi@sandiego.gov)

---

## Housing State of Emergency

San Diego is in the midst of a crisis that threatens the very quality of life in America's Finest City. With each passing day it's becoming more and more difficult for working and middle class families, seniors, and single young adults to purchase a home or rent an apartment in San Diego County.

Back in November I first asked the Mayor and Council to declare a Housing State of Emergency. In the short five months since that time, housing prices have continued to climb. Clearly, in my mind, the time for the City Council to act is actually long since past. We simply do not have the luxury to sit idly by without acting to improve this dire situation.

Consider this:

- In the years in which the vacancy rate dropped to 2% or lower, rents continued to escalate.
- Families are doubling or tripling up in existing housing units because they can't find a home that they can afford to rent or purchase.
- People are commuting 60 miles or more from suburbs in Temecula and Riverside, because they can't find an affordable home in San Diego County.
- Employers are having difficulty recruiting workers to fill positions in our high tech industries.

This crisis is not about a small number of families who can't find homes. The housing market as it stands right now is not affordable for more than half of our population. This is a crisis that must be addressed.

We are joined here today by numerous community members and representatives from a wide variety of organizations who are supporting this action.

Councilmember Inzunza and I are here today to call on the Mayor and City Council to declare a Housing State of Emergency in the City of San Diego. Since we first asked for this declaration in November, the crisis has only gotten worse. Rents are higher than ever, home prices are even further out of reach, and even a slight recession hasn't helped address the problem.

First and foremost, we need resources to build more housing for working and middle class families,

individuals, and seniors.

That is why today, in the face of this crisis, Councilmember Inzunza and I are proposing an innovative funding program that will generate tens of millions of dollars to create affordable housing now for working and middle class families, seniors and individuals citywide. In fact, we want to thank Councilmember Wear for endorsing our plan earlier this morning at committee. We appreciate his support.

Today, we call on the Mayor and City Council to support the creation of a multi-million-dollar family-housing fund by pooling and bonding our affordable housing tax increment revenue from our redevelopment areas citywide. By including CCDC in this bond, we can almost immediately access tens of millions of dollars to build affordable housing throughout our City.

We have never bonded CCDC's housing revenues before, but this is in no way a new concept. Municipalities throughout the State have adopted this method of financing as the most fiscally sound and prudent way to make use of our scarce public resources.

We are already doing the necessary research to issue this bond, and we believe that our financial analyst will identify between 40 to 60 million dollars or more in bonding capacity for housing citywide.

This will allow us to:

- build housing projects that are already in the pipeline sooner,
- create more new rental and ownership opportunities as soon as within the year,
- and make dollars available to build housing as part of our City of Villages.

Also as part of this State of Emergency we call on the Mayor and City Council to support a reasonable, balanced Inclusionary Housing Policy for our City.

Inclusionary housing is about providing housing for working families—teachers, police officers and low- and middle-income families struggling to break into our housing market.

Inclusionary housing is needed because the market is not working for our citizens. No one should be surprised that developers maximize profits by building only in the most expensive and most profitable market segments. While we are not opposed to builders making profits, at some point isn't it reasonable to ask "at what cost to our community?"

We need an inclusionary plan that provides housing in every neighborhood—not just our older urban communities.

Any plan we adopt has to support putting jobs where people live, and putting housing where people work—that is the only way to solve our jobs/housing imbalance.

Inclusionary policies are neither new nor cutting edge. They have been in place for years here in San Diego County and in other cities around the State.

But inclusionary housing alone is not enough. We call on the Mayor and City Council to support all of the elements listed in our State of Emergency memo.

Some of the items listed have already received support earlier today in the morning session of this committee, while others need to be advanced this afternoon.

Specifically, we call on the Mayor and City Council :

- to advance our City's Federal and State Housing Legislative Agenda;
- to require an Affordable Housing Impact Statement on all Manager's Reports on development projects;
- to develop a strategic plan outlining how the City's agencies—including the Housing Commission, Redevelopment Agency, Centre City Development Corporation—will work together collaboratively to make the best use of our combined resources to provide housing in our City.

We can do all of these things.

We can do them now.

All we ask is that the Mayor and City Council recognize that existing conditions constitute a State of Emergency with regard to housing in the City of San Diego.

This State of Emergency should be continued until our rental vacancy rates rise to at least 5 percent. This number is a sign of a balanced, economically healthy market—a balanced market that is fair to renters, landlords and homebuyers alike.

If we do all these things, including

- Pool and bond our redevelopment resources,
- Pass a reasonable Inclusionary Housing Policy for our City,
- Aggressively pursue legislative remedies at the State and Federal level,
- Monitor the housing impact of every Council decision, and
- Make our multiple agencies work together as one,

We believe that we will be able to

- get a handle on this immediate housing crisis,
- protect our working families, and
- guarantee future economic growth for our City.

Thank you.

# # #